

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 /031 W

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O 312205Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 246

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PANAMA 1852

EXDIS

FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER

DEPT PASS TO DUPTY UNDERSECRETARY OF THE ARMY KOREN

E.O. 11652: EXEMPT FROM AUTOMATIC DECLASSIFICATION

TAGS: PN, PFOR

SUBJECT: US-PANAMA TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: EMBASSY REVIEW OF  
DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE IS A REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE PERIOD SINCE THE DELIVERY OF THE 38-PAGE PANAMANIAN PAPER IN WASHINGTON ON MARCH 21 AND TO SUPPLEMENT DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR BELL'S REPORTING ON DEVELOPMENTS. BELL'S ARRIVAL MARCH 25 MARKED THE BEGINNING OF A VIGOROUS EFFORT TO PERSUADE THE PANAMANIAN TO "CLARIFY" THEIR DEFINITION OF THE DOCUMENT AND TO STATE THAT IT WAS AN "INFORMAL WORKING PAPER AT THE DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR LEVEL" RATHER THAN AN OFFICIAL POSITION PAPER. IN THE PROCESS, THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WHO MAY HAVE ACTED ON HIS OWN IN TRANSMITTING THE DOCUMENT, APPEARS TO HAVE HAD A ROUGH TIME. IN ANY EVENT, THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS HAVE MADE THE POINT THAT THE PANAMANIAN CANNOT, IN MID-STREAM, DECIDE TO CHANGE THE NATURE AND COURSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT ENCOUNTERING A VIGOROUS RESPONSE. THE EMBASSY'S POLITICAL SECTION, AND OTHER PARTS OF THE MISSION, WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR BELL TO ASSIST HIM IN CARRYING OUT HIS TALKS.END SUMMARY

1. ALTHOUGH DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR BELL HAS BEEN IN FREQUENT CONTACT

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WITH AMBASSADOR BUNKER BY RADIO AND HAS SENT SEVERAL CABLES, THE

FOLLOWING IS A REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE DELIVERY OF THE 38-PAGE PANAMANIAN DOCUMENT TO BELL IN WASHINGTON, WITH THE THOUGHT THAT THIS MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO AMBASSADOR BUNKER IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR PANAMA.

2. DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR BELL INFORMED MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM OF THE NATURE OF THE DOCUMENT ON MONDAY, MARCH 29, FOLLOWING HIS ARRIVAL IN PANAMA. IN HIS ACCOUNT, HE STATED THAT THE CONCLUSION WAS REACHED BY THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS THAT THE PAPER REPRESENTED A REVERSION TO "OLD-STYLE" NEGOTIATING TACTICS AND A "HARD-LINE POSITION," WHICH WE THOUGHT HAD SOFTENED SOMEWHAT IN RECENT MONTHS. BELL SAID, THEREFORE, THAT THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS COULD NOT ACCEPT IT AS AN OFFICIAL NEGOTIATING DOCUMENT. BELL TOLD THE COUNTRY TEAM THAT FOREIGN MINISTER TACK HAD REJECTED THE UNITED STATES' REQUEST, PASSED THROUGH AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ REVILLA, TO WITHDRAW THE PAPER. THE EMBASSY POLITICAL SECTION AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR BELL TO ASSIST HIM IN WHATEVER WAY POSSIBLE. DURING THE FOLLOWING DAYS, THE POLITICAL SECTION SERVED AS CHANNEL FOR BELL'S MESSAGES AND KEPT IN COMMUNICATION WITH HIM ON CONTADORA ISLAND SEVERAL TIMES DAILY BY RADIO AND COURIER.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER TACK'S PERSISTENCE IN REFUSING TO "REDEFINE" THE PAPER, OR OTHERWISE DEFUSE THE SITUATION, LEFT THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS WITH THE ALTERNATIVE OF USING THE "BIG GUN" OF AMBASSADOR BUNKER'S LETTER TO TACK OR OF USING THE "CARROT AND STICK" APPROACH EMBODIED IN THE "MESSAGES" SENT BY DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR BELL TO PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING GENERAL TORRIJOS. THESE SEVERAL MESSAGES WERE INTENDED TO INFORM TORRIJOS AND OTHER KEY PANAMANIANS OF THE OBSTACLE WHICH TREATING THE 38-PAGE DOCUMENT AS "AN OFFICIAL POSITION PAPER" WOULD CAUSE FOR THE NEGOTIATORS. THEY WERE TO BE TOLD THAT THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS WERE CONCERNED THAT THEY MIGHT BE MISUNDERSTANDING PANAMA'S INTENTIONS CONCERNING THE PAPER BECAUSE THE MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS DELIVERED LEFT THEM BELIEVING IT WAS INDEED AN OFFICIAL POSITION DOCUMENT. THUS, THE DOCUMENT, ITS IMPLIED "OFFICIAL STATUS", ITS PRESENTATION WITHOUT EXPLANATION, AND AFTER THE FIRST TWO DAYS, THE FAILURE OF THE PANAMANIAN DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR TO APPEAR ON THE ISLAND AS SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH BELL RAISED

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THE QUESTION IN THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS' MINDS WHETHER THE PANAMANIAN TEAM HAD LOST CONFIDENCE AND FAITH IN THEM.

4. THE FAILURE OF THE PANAMANIAN DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR TO APPEAR ON CONTADORA ISLAND AS SCHEDULED BEGAN TO LEND CREDENCE TO THE THOUGHT THAT TACK INTENDED TO USE THE PAPER AS "AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT" FOR HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH AMBASSADOR BUNKER. CONCURRENTLY, DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR BELL BEGAN TO RECEIVE STRONG INDICA-

TIONS FROM THE POLITICAL SECTION AND INTELLIGENCE CHANNELS THAT TACK HAD ACTED ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE IN DENDING THE DOCUMENT IN THE MANNER IN WHICH HE DID. OTHER KEY PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING PRESIDENT LAKAS, WHO ARE NORMALLY CONSULTED WHEN ANY SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVE IS TAKEN IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, REPORTEDLY WERE NOT CONSULTED AND WERE UNAWARE OF THE DOCUMENT OR THAT IT HAD BEEN SENT TO THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS.

5. DOUBT REMAINS THAT GENERAL TORRIJOS WAS INFORMED OF THE DOCUMENT PRIOR TO ITS TRANSMISSION. ONE PANAMANIAN SOURCE STATE THAT, EVEN IF TACK TOLD TORRIJOS ABOUT IT, HE FAILED TO MAKE THE GENERAL AWARE OF THE FULL RANGE OF IMPLICATIONS OR SUGGEST THE PROBABLE NEGATIVE IMPACT IT MIGHT MAKE ON THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS. WHETHER OR NOT GENERAL TORRIJOS WAS AWARE OF THE IMPLICATIONS FLOWING FROM THE PAPER, OR EVEN OF THE WAY IN WHICH IT WAS TRANSMITTED, THE EMBASSY RECEIVED SIGNALS THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER ACTED ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE. IT SEEMED THAT TORRIJOS EITHER HAD NOT UNDERSTOOD THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PAPER, OR IF HE DID, THE SIGNALS SUGGESTED THAT HE WAS DISASSOCIATING HIMSELF FROM IT.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEE.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 247

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 PANAMA 1852

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6. EVIDENCE THAT THE UNITED STATES' NEGOTIATORS TACTICS WERE BEARING FRUIT APPEARED FIRST ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 28 WHEN A PANAMANIAN OFFICIAL TOLD EMBASSY'S POLITICAL OFFICER THAT THERE WAS GREAT SURPRISE IN THE GOVERNMENT OVER THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S ACTIONS IN SENDING THE DOCUMENT, AND THAT AN INVESTIGATION WAS BEING MADE OF WHY THE DOCUMENT WAS GIVEN TO THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE AFTERNOON DAILY EL

PANAMA AMERICAN OF MARCH 28 WOULD HAVE A FEATURE EDITORIAL VERY FAVORABLE TO THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS AND THAT THE EDITORIAL SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE CRITICISM OF BELL WHICH HAD APPEARED IN RICARDO LINCE'S COLUMN. LATER THE SAME DAY TORRIJOS INFORMED BELL VIA THE "BACK CHANNEL" THAT THE DOCUMENT WAS NOT INTENDED AS A PANAMANIAN POSITION PAPER. CONCURRENTLY, AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ RELAYED A MESSAGE TO BELL THAT HE WOULD BE ON CONTADORA ISLAND THE FOLLOWING DAY TO RESUME DISCUSSIONS. THE TACTICS THUS SUCCEEDED IN GETTING COMMUNICATION REESTABLISHED WITHOUT THE NECESSITY OF USING AMBASSADOR BUNKER'S LETTER. HENCE, AMBASSADOR BUNKER'S PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH FOREIGN MINISTER TACK HAS NOT BEEN DRAWN INTO THE COURSE OF THESE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS.

7. COMMENT: FROM INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME, IT SEEMS THAT TACK'S PRESENTATION OF THE PAPER AS HE DID, AND THE VIGOR OF THE UNITED STATES' RESPONSE, CAUSED CONSIDERABLE TURMOIL WITHIN THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT. FROM THE ACCOUNTS WE HAVE RECEIVED, TACK WAS CALLED TO TORRIJOS' BEACH HOME ON MARCH 28 FOR QUESTIONING CONCERNING THE DOCUMENT. HE SPENT THE FOLLOWING MORNING AT THE PRESIDNET'S OFFICE. HIS

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REFUSAL TO "CLARIFY" THE DOCUMENT WAS REVERSED BY GENERAL TORRIJOS. NEVER BEFORE HAVE THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS CALLED TACK'S BLUFF ON HIS OWN GROUND--WITHIN THE REGIME ITSELF. WE SUSPECT THAT THE EXPERIENCE WILL MAKE TACK (OR TORRIJOS HIMSELF IF HE WAS REALLY BEHIND THE MANEUVER) LESS WILLING TO TRY SUCH GAMBLERIES IN THE FUTURE. TACK PROBABLY IS SMARTING OVER THE PRESSURES THAT WERE PLACED ON HIM BY THE "MESSAGES". TACK'S DISPLEASURE WAS MADE APPARENT DURING THE PAST WEEK (AS IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS OF CRISIS DURING YEAR PRECEDING THE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING) BY HIS REFUSAL TO DEAL WITH THE EMBASSY ON OTHER MATTERS NOT RELATED TO THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS AT THE DEPUTY LEVEL AND AMBASSADOR BUNKER'S ARRIVAL SHOULD PLACE OUR RELATIONS BACK ON THE TRACKS.

THIS MESSAGE IS BEING PASSED TO USCINCSO AND GOVERNOR PANCANAL. DANIELS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEE.

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## Message Attributes

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